

1. MONTGOMERY TO MEMPHIS

This is the picture of a good samaritan seeking to staunch the flow of life from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

It also is a picture used to tell the world where the fatal shot came from. The caption has the victim's associates pointing toward the bathroom window of a seedy flophouse - all point to the same place and to that place alone.

This grew into the official solution of the crime:

that it was the evil deed of a lone, unassisted, alienated small-time thief and jail-escapee, James Earl Ray;

that Ray used a Remington Gamemaster automatic rifle and with a single lucky shot, using a .30-06 Lockett-Core hunting bullet, killed King by severing his spinal column;

that the sniper's lair was the common bathroom of a crumbling flophouse at 422½ South Main Street, Memphis, Tennessee;

that when hit King was standing on the second-floor balcony of the black-owned Lorraine Motel, right outside his room, 304, and was about to leave for dinner with friends prior to an appearance in support of local sanitation workers who were on strike; and

that by its diligence and derring-do the FBI is responsible for the June 8, 1968, capture of Ray at Heathrow Airport, near London, England, during the funeral observances for Senator Robert Kennedy who, like his brother, President John, also had been assassinated.

The caption added to this picture, the false representation that all of King's friends knew the shot had come from that flophouse bath-

room, innocent on the part of the time-pressured media, represents the beginning of one of the FBI's most successful disinformation operations. Misuse and misrepresentation were not limited to this picture. The campaign of misinforming the people was instant, large and successful. By these false representations, typified by misuse of this picture, truth was crushed to earth with the fallen King.

Continuation of the same campaign by the same officials, in time abetted by self-seekers and commercializers, has kept truth entombed - to now.

This picture is one of a series of 102 taken by Joseph Louw and sold to Time-Life Corporation, then still publishing Life magazine. Louw was on assignment for public TV, taking movies of King for a TV special. When Louw heard the shot he grabbed not his movie camera, the film in which belonged to public TV, but his own personal/^{35mm} still camera. This meant the film and the pictures it captured belonged to Louw, not public TV which was paying him.

This also meant that, instead of having thousands of individual pictures, which is what motion pictures are, and instead of having pictures that would show motion and by their continuity capture odds and ends of information not noticed by humans as still cameras cannot,

Louw had comparatively few pictures relevant to the crime itself.

It meant a repetition of history. Life, which obtained all rights from Louw, never released all his pictures. This is precisely what it did with the most important pictures of the assassination of President Kennedy.

I had to go to court to get prints of the Louw pictures.

Were it not for this and other commercializations of the great tragedy, much of subsequent history might have been different. Lingering doubts about the alleged solution to the crime would be fewer if not entirely eliminated. The probability of a cover-up would have been less, that of a real solution would have been greater. There would have been less possibility of the coercion of an involuntary guilty plea from James Earl Ray by the world's most famous criminal lawyer. There would have been a ~~real~~ trial.

In the end only the lone accused, James Earl Ray, of all the principal figures, wanted the trial he has been denied since in a strange series of recondite misadventures, each of which became a new national trauma.

The guilty plea was entered on March 10, 1969.

National editorial indignation over the aborting of a trial, which really means the nullification of our entire system of justice, was widespread. The editorial writers of such leading papers as The New York Times and The Washington Post let passion erupt in a volcano of anger and frustration. Their principled eloquence, rare among even such master wordsmiths, burned like scorching lava. The lucidity of their outrage vented the national shock and anguish. They cut and slashed at the deal with which it was all covered over. In their protests they were like modern-day Emile Zolas and Tom Paines.

Magnificent! Faithful to the great traditions of the past.

It was not by the great men of the past, so it lasted only overnight.

There was also the frustration and the inchoate rage of the sorrowing poor of the denied black masses. The rotting hearts of the cities roared in days of flames in this venting of helplessness and despair they could not relieve in words.

The great man who had risen from among them, had come to speak for them and to lead them toward a promised land never seen, and the hope he held out were gone. The still-gutted major cities memorialize

the meaning of the man to those who loved and needed him. Those ugly hulks still stand, stark reminders of the nation's need of him and of its failures after him.

No other "black messiah" has risen. None will.

Seemingly, it is all over, save that this monstrous murder of the great man did prick the national consciousness toward overdue and helpful change, in law and in life.

But there persists pain that one such as King had become could be killed and so stupefying and paralyzing a crime - the costliest crime in our history - could go on and on without solution as crimes are solved in this land and as the solutions are tested to earn our acceptance.

Most people do not believe the official account of the crime.

Through a series of obstructions of justice and interferences with the normal workings of justice, what was simple was made complex. The result was confusion. The popular mind was lost in irrelevancies, falsities, fictions and fabrications. Joining the official mythologies were a not unexpected series of other fictions, some commercial, some by the dedicated wrong, some from those who are against government per se and some to satisfy the emptiness hollowed out of so many hearts by the

absence of truth.

Only dissatisfaction and disillusionment remained.

This was the official design, the deliberate intent of officialdom of all levels, from the most insignificant of the minions of the Memphis police to the revered founding father of the FBI in Washington and eminences of the law in the Department of Justice.

It is appropriate that the one entrance to that temple of law and justice then locked was the one over which is inscribed "The Place of Justice Is a Hallowed Place."

There was the major plot and there was a series of coinciding plots that amount to de facto conspiracies, The King Conspiracies. The crime itself was a conspiracy because more than one person was involved in it. Those officials who framed and covered up did not conspire to kill. But by their framing and ^{cover} ~~cover~~ing up they sheltered the actual assassins. Since then they have had to continue covering up to protect themselves.

Had it been known before the numbing of time had quieted the aching hearts that there was a cover-up - whether or not intended by all as a cover-up - there is no telling what new violence would have rocked

the land.

The cover-up takes us back to the picture of the pointing disciples and the good samaritan.

The stunned associates of the fallen King were not pointing where all accounts had them pointing. To this we return. In the captions they were identified by name. Use was extensive - coast-to-coast and all around the world, with extraordinary attention in Life magazine,

But nobody paid any attention to the good samaritan.

No editors wondered over the absence of the name of this man of seeming rare presence of mind and goodness of heart.

To the time of this writing, more than nine years after the terrible crime, his name has not appeared in print.

Whether or not this is a conspiracy of silence, it is exceptional.

If it had not been for a secret police action, King would not have been in Memphis on April 4, 1968, there to have his life's blood and his works waste with his blood onto the cold concrete of the second-floor balcony of the Lorraine Motel.

This police action was for all practical purposes identical with those of the CIA in its interferences in other lands.

It was part of an entirely wrong domestic operation by the FBI and the Memphis police jointly. Naturally, both kept it entirely secret.

Irony of ironies, the first to reach the fallen body was a policeman masquerading as a private citizen, a dedicated civil-rights worker.

He was not just a police agent, a stooge. He was a Memphis policeman in plain clothes, one of a large penetration operation.

In all the turmoil swirling around more than a decade of American political assassinations, there is no grester incongruity than that the first to rush to seek to give aid was by then already bloody from the crime.

But it was then too late. There was no undoing what had been done.

The single hunting-type bullet that caused two massive wounds, one visible and reported, the other hidden by clothing and kept an official secret until I exposed it, severed the spinal cord before its stub stopped just below the left shoulder blade. It was visible as a little lump to the doctors who examined the dead body. It is visible in the photographs they took.

How King's life ended is in dispute except that he was killed by a single bullet and where it happened. The Department of Justice, its

FBI and the prosecutorial forces of the State of Tennessee and of Memphis say Ray alone did it. They do not say it officially because the official story is that there was no conspiracy, but in secret they believe there was a conspiracy that included at least Ray's brother Gerald William, known as Jerry.

Most people believe there was a conspiracy. Fewer believe Ray was not the shooter.

King was controversial in life as the facts of his death are in controversy.

His public life spanned less than two decades, all controversial. from the time he was first heard of outside his own close circle of friends and associates.

How it all started was explained by Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr., during a party preparatory to the bestowing of the Nobel Peace Prize on his son in Oslo, Norway. The formal award was on Thursday, December 12, 1964. (Martin, Jr. was the youngest of all to be so honored, the third black and the second American black.)

The father said simply,

And all you got to do if you want to contribute, you got to

ask the Lord and let him know. He came down through Georgia and He laid his hand upon me and my wife and He gave us Martin Luther King and our prayers were answered.

(King: A Critical Biography, by David L. Lewis, p.261, Penguin Pelican edition. This is a well-annotated and thoroughly researched work. It dates to 1970. It is critical, one of the reasons I here draw on it.)

Martin Luther King, Jr., was born January 15, 1929.

There are many beginnings in the lives of us all. We are conceived. We are birthed. We crawl, we walk, we talk and we grow. We pass through puberty, we become adults, and as we live we influence and are influenced by others, doing good and ill as each goes about his own life and the means by which it is sustained.

With the junior Martin Luther King, known as Mike when a young man, the first of many beginnings, the first of significance in his subsequent career and works, was when he decided to follow his father and become a Baptist preacher.

Then he became pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, in January 1954. The start of his national prominence followed the rebellion of Rosa Parks on Thursday, December 1, 1955. As of then, only nine years before he became a Nobel laureate, King was unknown. He was a young man with a gift of oratory and a

doctorate from Boston College thrust into a crucial role at the outset of one of the major struggles for decent treatment of blacks, for what came to be called "the civil rights" campaign.

Of this beginning King was later to say in what David L. Lewis described as prose that caught the fire of his spoken word, "They will be old, oppressed, battered Negro women symbolized in a seventy-two-year-old woman in Montgomery, Alabama, who rose up with a sense of dignity and with her people decided not to ride segregated buses, and who responded with ungrammatical profundity to one who inquired about her weariness, 'My feet is tired but my soul is at rest.'" (Lewis, pp. 190-1)

A new world began in a storm when another black woman, Rosa Parks, sat in a white-only seat in those Jim Crow days and refused the order of Driver J. F. Blake to go to the back of the bus and stand. She was arrested at Court Square by Montgomery Police Officers Day and Nixon.

The black elders of the community decided on its youngest preacher as their leader in their fight for local improvement. It centered on but was not limited to ending Jim Crow, as in the end it did. Because of the fierce resistance of the slave-mindedness of many in the white community and their political leadership, the bitterness of its spirit

and the viciousness of retaliation that extended to bombings, this struggle drew national attention.

With King the leader, attention focused on him. With the ultimate success of that struggle, he received calls to go elsewhere, to help with or lead in other such efforts.

There were many calls. He answered them, initially with his Montgomery associates and later with others after the founding of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Sometimes he made only a speech and a few local appearances. Sometimes he was much more active, including in a leadership role.

This was a new beginning, with much to be learned. There were many mistakes. Some led to broken heads, others to broken hearts as struggles failed in the face of the unrestrained white use of white total control of political, police and court machinery, all bitterly revanchist, resentful that blacks wanted improvement, decent treatment and, most feared of all, change.

Black churches burned throughout the south. Black leaders' homes were bombed. Blacks filled jails to where jails could not hold all those arrested. Blood flowed freely and blacks suffered with it.

The only part of this new struggle not new to blacks was how to take the suffering. Suffering was a norm of black life. Leading themselves in opposition to oppression on a large scale and against unconstitutional white laws designed to repress blacks was new. It was outside their experiences, although a few, like King, had studied Ghandi. Also new was open resistance to and fighting against the white power and control and the storm-trooper-minded police abetted by white mobs.

As blacks felt their way out of their overdue outburst against the intolerability and the inhumanity of what had been forced upon them, they did make mistakes, tactical and strategic. King made his share. He attracted more attention and caused more dissension because ever more with each struggle he was forced to the front, to lead. It was impossible for one preacher with his own church to serve and with an organization to lead to do all that was asked, all that was required.

Demands for him to appear and, if nothing else, to speak came from all corners of the land. The need for funds was great. Bail had to be paid to empty the overflowing jails. Lawyers were needed. Families were in want. Blacks were the poorest and these financial needs were heavy. King was everywhere, sometimes in the wrong places, sometimes

not in the right places at the right times, seeking urgently needed support and carrying the message.

Often he was in jail. Often he was criticized for letting himself be bailed out.

It was a tumultuous time, beset with great suffering and physical and personal dangers, a time in which many lost their lives. Whites who from the north/went south to lend their bodies to the struggles lost their lives, too.

But through it all, despite mistakes, the long-overdue changes began. King, who not uncommonly was in greater personal danger, came to symbolize the struggles and to be more hated and in more danger for it. Much of the success of these struggles is due to his effort, his leadership, and to the influence he developed outside the south.

Through it all, confronted with the most vicious violence, he preached Gandhian nonviolence and love. He led march after march as blacks, in time joined by more and more whites, chanted, "We shall overcome." As the marches led to jails, so did the jailings and the brutalities and other excesses of the unyielding whites lead to change. It was slow, but a start, some change. With success as with failures,

King rapidly assumed more stature. Throughout the country and then the world he became a famous man. It was a meteoric rise to fame, unprecedented for a black. Nine years after Rosa Parks valued the rest of her soul more than the suffering from the ache of her feet, he was a Nobel laureate. Between these two events there were the more spectacular, more dangerous confrontations, like Selma and Birmingham, countless others less known and less remembered and thousands of speeches in which he preached his belief.

How he could speak! In three days in Chicago one June he spoke 30 times and still led marches of thousands. (Lewis,p.203) His words turned people on and they loaned their bodies. His words reached people's hearts and he won their support. His passion, his preaching of morality, reached souls. He was a man of exceptional eloquence, an eloquence that moved people.

Through it all he learned, he grew, he changed, and he became increasingly controversial.

This is not the story of the life of the man. Rather is it the untold story of his death and what followed his death, the supposed investigation of it, the story of The King Conspiracies. Because of the unprecedented stature of the man, there are abundant biographical

sources. His life is accounted for in all standard works of reference. The contemporary press abounds in news stories. They are not always accurate or impartial but his life and his acts and criticisms of both are plentiful.

It is in the aspects of his life that relate to his death that we have interest.

A primary consideration is that, through all the years he was an "uppity nigger" to all those bitter-ending, violence-prone red-neck police and unofficial thugs, through all the many chances to kill him in jails, where it is easier and sometimes safer, through all the assaults on him and his marches and all the bombings, he lived. He was not killed then. There were thousands of plots to kill him but not one came to fruition.

This appears to be an anomalie - the man so hated and so schemed against surviving all for so many years.

He could have been killed while he was praying and marching, while he was calling for black access to white-only public facilities like eating places, while he was calling for the vote for blacks, while he slept. But he survived those years.

In all those years economic issues were never out of his mind. But he did not then try to do anything about them.

The roots of racism are economic. The white need to hold the black down was also economic. Whites profited from the downtrodden condition of the blacks. This was true of other people when they first came to this country in large numbers, from the Orientals to the Irish and other whites who were first cast into the lowest economic levels of the hardest and poorest-paid labor from which they also had to rise. Whiteness of skin made rise easier for those who escaped poverty.

Success in his first great struggle, in Montgomery, began with black economic pressure - a boycott of the bus line.

As the struggle grew and intensified and he accepted calls to lend his influence to it in other places, he was soon caught between the belief of some whites that blacks were moving too fast and of black militants that forward movement was too slow. When he began to emphasize economic issues, established black leadership, much more conservative than he, criticized and opposed him. This was particularly true after his early and continuing opposition to the Vietnam war antagonized the Johnson administration. The money for practical programs to deal with urban poverty had to come from Washington. As Lewis notes (pp.297-8) and as King believed, the only place this money could come from was spending for the Vietnam war.

He was opposed to that war and all wars on the simple *Thou Shalt Not Kill* basis. It was a matter of deep religious belief with him. But in speaking out against it early and vigorously, he frightened even some of his own SCLS associates, not only the black middle-class and those of the older and more established organizations.

He would have spoken out against the war in any event, as he had when it began, without its receiving any attention. His campaigning against the war became more consistent when he became more active in urban areas. He bracketed it with unmet urban needs.

His warnings against the volcanic eruptions in the black ghettos went unheeded. Hardly anything else could be expected of such wretched conditions of life.

This shift of emphasis and his strong antiwar speaking scared some white liberals who had supported him, as it turned the Johnson administration against him.

There are those who wanted him to remain a preacher leading peaceful marches of those who clapped hands and chanted hymns while his people remained downtrodden.

The beginnings of his planned Poor Peoples' March on Washington go back to his early activism. In two of his more memorable addresses of 1964 he touched on these pressing questions. On August 9 in New York City he warned that "as long as the Negro feels himself on a lonely island in a vast sea of plenty there will be the ever-present threat of violence and riots." In his Nobel speech of December 10 he

tried to tell the white world of the "debilitating and grinding poverty" that "affects my people and chains them to the lowest rung of the economic ladder."

It is probable that the first of these terrible riots, that in the Watts ghetto of Los Angeles, dramatized for him the superficiality of civil rights gains alone. Those that followed, some more terrible, continued to shock him. All of them and the lives they cost troubled him deeply.

His response to the cry of the militants, "burn, baby, burn," was that there is no recorded case of a revolution succeeding in the face of an army that remained loyal to the government.

Nine years after he was assassinated, in July 1977, the more conservative blacks were complaining that blacks had not been repaid for their deciding votes in electing Jimmy Carter President. Vernon Jordan, executive director of the Urban League, then spoke in the words that prompted his predecessor to criticize King for speaking similarly. He protested that oppression remained the lot of the poor, that their needs were not being met. Yet there was continuing extravagance with the military. For speaking as King had, he was criticized as King had been, beginning with the administration's sharp attack on him.

Whether or not King's first perception of the superficiality of civil rights gains began with Watts, it was integral in his planned Poor Peoples' March on

Washington. The nation did fail to make the necessary reform for which he campaigned.

It failed to care for its poor.

But he did not live to stage that march as he had planned it, as he did not live to see his views on the wrongfulness of the Vietnam war become those of the nation.

David L. Lewis puts it succinctly in saying (p.374) that King was "looking to the Poor People's Campaign and beyond" it, "toward a national political base." He quotes King as writing, "Our challenge is to organize the power we already have in our midst." He meant all the poor, including the working poor, like seasonal and otherwise underpaid labor and victimized tenants, who are numerous in urban areas.

Perhaps King could have built this power base. Nobody else has.

He was always seeking unification, a basis for working with those with whom he disagreed and who had disagreed with him.

Reports persist that quietly he and Malcolm X were drawing toward each other.

One Muslim effort to enter into a dialogue with King was in 1957. Malcolm X made another effort in 1960, when he invited King to address a Muslim rally in New York. According to Lewis (p.125), King's refusal was from opposition to Malcolm's and the Muslim separatism.

The two men appear to have met only once, in Washington on March 26, 1964,

when they joined in demanding civil-rights legislation from the Congress. (Lewis,p.171)

The next year, on February 3, 1965, Malcolm made a significant gesture. It was during one of the more dangerous periods of black struggle. King had been jailed in Selma, Dallas County, Alabama, amidst boasts of "There going to be some niggers killed here before this is over. They'll die like flies." Malcolm X, as Lewis says (p.268), then appeared to be undergoing a political change. With King in danger, he went to Selma. He told Coretta King, as Lewis puts it, that "he counted on his militant reputation to scare whites to her husband's cause." (p.268)

Malcolm X did change in his beliefs following his hegira to the Muslim world and his trip through Africa. After he returned, he was less the separatist. He did not see all whites as devils. His attitude toward women that today might be called sexist also changed. These tended to reduce the distance between him and King. They tended to make it possible for the two to begin to work together in causes of common interest.

Literature seems unable to address the meaning, the significance of King when he was so important in our national life. He was found to be at once too conservative and too radical. He was criticized for mistakes, those he did make and those he did not make. Despite all the good and warm friends and fellow campaigners who surrounded him, he appears to have been too far ahead of them. With the eloquence

of his Baptist oratory, he mixed religious belief with civil rights. From this combination and from experience he came to realize that all else lacked real meaning without human rights, a decent job and a decent home as well as schools and some improvement in education. In this he was pretty much alone among those influential in leadership roles regardless of race.

He was much more radical than the unsatisfied militants considered him. He was at the same time much more conservative than the more conservative elements saw him.

He was a man whose effort was to achieve what he believed it was possible to attain.

Regardless of how justified the demands of the militants were, they could not be realized then. Regardless of how slowly conservatives wanted to go, the time was long past when blacks or the nation as a whole could be content to crawl.

As much as any one man could, more than anyone from any minority group could ever have expected to, King moved blacks, the nation and a large part of the world forward.

This he could not have done had he but preached and marched to the clapping of hands and the chanting of prayers. It could not have been done with no more than demands for better schools and the right to vote. It could be done and it was done

by changing national thinking and direction.

Among the working poor he hoped to weld into a political force were the sanitation workers of Memphis, Tennessee. Almost all were black. Most were members of Local 1733 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, an AFL-CIO affiliate.

King went to Memphis to support them in a strike for better wages and working conditions and for union recognition. The plight of these municipal employees was so desperate anything could trigger a strike.

On February 1, 1968, two black garbage collectors were crushed to death when an automatic compactor was set off by accident. Then a few days later, when a full day was not worked on a sewer job, white workers received a full day's pay but the blacks did not. The union made demands on the city administration. Henry Loeb, an ultraconservative businessman, was then mayor. Most blacks had voted against him. They also did not trust him. While the city administration indicated a willingness to meet some demands, it would not enter into a contract. It also refused to recognize the union as the exclusive bargaining agency, to deduct union dues or to grant a 10 percent wage increase over a period of two years. The strike began February 12.

The strikers achieved broad local support from blacks and from the international union of which they were part, as well as from other unions. Nationally

known black leaders like Roy Wilkins and Bayard Rustin also appeared to lend support.

Among the local black ministers who saw more in the conflict than the immediate troubles of their striking black parishioners and their families was Reverend James Lawson. He and other black ministers believed the Memphis situation was ideally suited to the kind of nonviolent effort King espoused. They believed other benefits would flow from community-wide organization and support of the strike. Memphis was still a typical southern river city. Its desegregation had been slight. Loeb typified the politician blacks believed held them down and prevented progress.

On March 16 King made a brief appearance in response to the invitation that he help. His speech was along the lines of his planned Poor People's Campaign. He encouraged organization as "the way to gain power. Don't go back to work until all your demands are met. There is a need to unite beyond class lines. Negroes must join with Negro have-nots."

He promised to return. An unusual snowstorm delayed the demonstration he was to lead until Thursday, March 28. From all accounts, including those of older Memphis blacks with whom I've spoken, the entire black community was encouraged by the possibilities of a King-led, massive, nonviolent march and the nationwide attention it could attract. Only a minuscule organization of black youth calling themselves the Invaders was not enthusiastic. They lacked faith in nonviolence.

The head of the March 28 procession had advanced only three blocks from Clayborn Temple, the black church at which it was forming, what what the local morning Commercial-Appeal of the next day described as a "full scale riot" broke out.

It was serious. Fifty people were injured. More than 100 were arrested. A boy was shot dead by the police.

Property damage was slight compared with other big-city riots, which this really was not. Fewer than a hundred store windows were broken. There was some looting from the window displays.

The violence was by a small band of young people.

We return to the riot and the Invaders later. Here it is important to note the consequences upon King and his hopes for large nonviolent demonstrations, particularly in the nation's capital.

He was widely criticized, including by prominent blacks, for the violence in Memphis. On TV that night President Johnson described it as "mindless," as indeed it was, for blacks, if not for all others.

One of the more vicious attacks on him was a local editorial cartoon depicting a fainted King being carried away by the arms. It was captioned "Chicken a la King."

He was stunned by the unexpected violence. It dismayed him, too, but he was not in fear of harm to himself. That fear the local leaders and the police shared.

Wisely they took him to one of the fancier white-owned motels, the Holiday Inn's Rivermont. It was more isolated, standing by itself, with a broad lawn. If there was going to be more violence, this was a better place and a better area for King.

Rather than being afraid, he immediately announced he would return to lead another March on April 5. Almost everyone begged him not to but he insisted. It was not that his manhood was at issue from the defamations. He was determined to lead a nonviolent march.

Before returning to Atlanta on the 29th he met with leaders of the Invaders. He spent several hours reasoning with them. While he did not change their minds, his impact on them was such that they assured him of help and cooperation when he came back. They would act as marshals of the march to prevent violence. When he returned they also provided him with an armed guard under the most exceptional of circumstances.

Although King was severely shaken by the violence and recognized the harmful influence it could exert on his planned march on Washington, he went ahead with the rest of his schedule. On April first his headquarters said he would return to Memphis on the third, a Wednesday, to prepare for the demonstration of the fifth.

Before then there was the certainty of political change. LBJ announced he

would not run for President again.

In Memphis on the evening of the third, King asked his close associate, Reverend Ralph Abernathy, to speak for him at the Masonic Temple while he did other things. Lewis believes (p.386) that Abernathy phoned King "to come to the church not so much to satisfy the congregation," which is what Abernathy said, "as to give his friend the needed uplift of addressing a thoroughly sympathetic audience."

As he spoke King grew emotional. He acknowledged threats against his life, told of the delay in his plane leaving Atlanta so it could be searched and said, "I don't know what will happen now." He said that whatever happened did not matter any more "because I've been to the mountain-top." Acknowledging that he wanted to live long, he said, "I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And he's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land."

He assured them that "we as a people will get to the promised land" and that he feared no man.

His emotionalism wet the eyes of the audience and surprised his associates and the local leaders.

He and his party were at the Lorraine, the black-owned motel in a rundown part of town that had once been a main business section. Despite later mythologies

alleging King had been forced there as part of a conspiracy, when in Memphis he had usually stayed there. He favored one part in particular because it looked out over the swimming pool.

Plans were for him to go to court to fight an injunction that had been issued, then to have supper that night at the home of Reverend Samuel B. Kyles. (I go into this with the text of a tape-recorded interview with Kyles in FRAME-UP, pp.482-8.) King asked others to represent him in court so he could spend the day at the motel in meetings with associates.

So much can pivot on such small points.

In a February 1971 interview Kyles told me that it was almost impossible to keep King to a schedule when he was around people. He just loved to be with and to communicate with people. Knowing King would dally and would be late, they had lied to him and told him that supper was set for five o'clock. This was in the hope of getting him there by six. A little before six, while Abernathy was completing dressing in the room they shared, King and Kyles stood outside on the balcony, engaged in small talk with those of King's party immediately below on the parking-lot level.

The numbering of this part of the motel is confusing. Room 304 is on the second, not the third, floor.

Solomon Jones, who was the driver of the Cadillac loaned to King by a local

black mortician, told King the evening was getting cool and advised that he take his topcoat. King said he would and that he was leaving to get it then. Kyles turned to walk to the stairs to get into his own car. All accounts have King leaning over the metal railing of the balcony during this conversation. Kyles told me he had taken no more than five steps when he heard the one shot that was fatal.

King had been to the mountaintop.

His vision in his memorable address during the march on Washington of JFK's day is engraved on his tombstone in Atlanta's Southview cemetery:

"Free at Last, Free at Last. Thank God Almighty, I'm Free at Last!"

In this I have sought to give the reader enough of an understanding of the man and his career to make comprehensible the crime and the various conspiracies involved. In an effort to simplify this brief history of a complex man in a complicated world, I have eliminated an enormity of detail that from my personal files alone greatly exceeds several books. Aside from a file drawer of my own clippings, I have volumes and volumes of those of the FBI, plus many thousands of other once-secret official records. For this account it is not necessary to flaunt unneeded detail in what has become the traditional way of seeking scholarly and critical acceptance.

That Solomon Jones drove a white Cadillac is not essential here. Nor is it

that Andy Young replaced King in the Memphis courtroom battle against the injunction. Nor that King had snacked on catfish (which is quite good in Memphis) during the afternoon.

The revisionism about the man has commenced. It will continue, as with John and Robert Kennedy. That particular revisionism, which serves unseen purposes, is designed for a number of them. One is to make it appear that the Kennedys are responsible for John's assassination. It is to praise this wretchedness of the intelligence agencies to characterize this propaganda as no more than untrue.

But there is little one writer can do to undo what amounts to official propaganda.

There is not much more an individual can do when similar rottenness earns an NBC prime-time spot and all the money that represents and when this is keyed to the literary snakepit of a book titled Code-Name Zorro in which the same people combine in revisionism about King and his murder. For all practical purposes they have done what the spooks of the world do and call "black books," those that serve the purposes of intelligence services while having no visible intelligence connection.

Excess and unjustified criticism of these agencies helps them. In this country they weep bitter tears upon the Congress while their legislative representatives and other officials show the readily available disproofs of false charges.

Unjustified criticism obliterates that which is justified.

This is what, among others, Abby Mann and Mark Lane have done with the wealth readily available for such ventures from NBC and Prentice-Hall. (Years ago I found Prentice-Hall units housed where CIA "assets" and other covers were housed.)

These revisionisms, which are thoroughly professional and well promoted, mislead the people and such institutions as the press and the Congress.

That they here combine serves to underscore the obscured reality.

It is not true that the Kennedys are responsible for the assassination of John in a Castro "kickback" reaction.

It is not true that the FBI killed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Both are fabrications by those with truth to hide and to hide from.

Both have achieved wide acceptance throughout the land simply because of the means available to the fabricators. These canards have had extensive attention and repetition.

As a consequence of years of this kind of propagandizing, a large percentage of the people believe both falsehoods. Some people of influence are intimidated and silenced by it.

One of the most frequently asked questions, especially from college audiences, suggests that all the assassinations were by the same conspirators.

The work I have done on both of these assassinations leaves no doubt at all that the same people did not kill the President and King. It also leaves no doubt at all that those who have received widespread personal attention by naming alleged assassins and suspects lie and mislead.

There are some questions to which we may never have answers.

When lawyers face this situation, they ask themselves a traditional question, "cui bono?" Who benefits?

Following this reasoning suggests a different connection between these two and other political assassinations.

In thinking of who could have found benefit in such terrible crimes, one must understand the victims and consider what they stood for. What was there in each that made enemies see gain from killing him?

These two men and Robert Kennedy and Malcolm X had all undergone great changes. All had had many enemies. Countless threats to kill each are recorded. But until after each had undergone a radical transformation, he was not killed.

How Malcolm X grew and increased his influence has been mentioned.

Some of the growth in King also has been noted. There is more. Another change is his realization that nonviolence can succeed only when there is a moral conscience to which appeal can be made. In the United States of his day, he had

found this moral conscience lacking. (His former close associate, Ralph Abernathy, addressed this in the April 15, 1969, issue of Look, which was built around the last of three articles on the assassination by William Bradford Huie.) King was no longer depending on peaceful marches and shouted pieties. In this he did more than move toward those from the left who had been critical of him. He also increased his leadership possibilities and his following and the influence this could mean.

Robert Kennedy, few realize, was killed the night he won the California primary, a victory that made him the most likely next President. For years he had many enemies. For years he had been a hawk on Vietnam. Then he switched, became a dove and a probable candidate - and only then was killed.

The changes in John Kennedy and in his presidency will be debated for years. One that is little known is that he had decided to liquidate the Vietnam adventure. He had actually ordered a staged and quiet withdrawal of our troops, then called "advisers." The first returnees reached the United States. Then he was killed. Several days later there was a brief statement from the Pentagon. It had "reevaluated" its prior Vietnam reevaluation and found it to be optimistic.

What followed is one of history's greatest tragedies, a murderous, ruinous futility that would have taken a still more terrible toll if it had had any other end.

The opposition of these victims of assassination to that frightful war is one

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of the unifying factors in the assassinations.

Another is that each believed or had come to believe that the urgent national need was the healing of the rot of the major cities. This meant taking fabulous amounts of money from other uses and spending it on the poor - not in war-servicing industries.

This is not to say that a cabal of the military-industrial complex killed these leaders to have the national treasure spent on the military and in those industries supplying the military.

However, it does underscore the unusual coincidence that, while each of these most prominent victims of political assassination had survived many threats, none was killed until after his policies, his directions and the course of his leadership was clear.

If this be only coincidence, it is coincidence worthy of thought. There is no definitive answer if this is put as a question.